

## What the Critics Say

“The Beekeeper’s Apprentice has the power to charm the most grizzled Baker Street Irregular.”

— *New York Daily News*

“A fascinating and often moving account of a friendship so unusual and so compelling that one almost accepts it as being historically real.”

— *Denver Post*

“A tour de force and a great read.”

— *Booklist*

“A fine, perceptive storyteller, King is particularly adroit at capturing the milieus in which her characters reside.”

— *Publishers Weekly*

“Remarkably beguiling.”

— *Boston Globe*

“Wonderful! An intelligently and imaginatively crafted novel that’s also great fun.”

— *The Droid Review of Mystery*



[www.everyonesreading.info](http://www.everyonesreading.info)



## Discussion Questions for *The Beekeeper’s Apprentice*

Use these questions to guide your book group in a discussion about *The Beekeeper’s Apprentice*.

How does the Great War shape the book? How does this period in history allow Mary Russell to assume roles in areas of society usually reserved for men?

Holmes uses the game of chess to sharpen Mary’s strategic thinking and intuition. How does chess serve as a metaphor throughout the story? In what ways does the author use the game to comment upon the master-apprentice relationship?

Holmes and Russell don many disguises throughout the book, including cross-dressing. What access does this method of disguise give them? How does Russell’s world change when she is dressed as a man?

The art of deduction is used throughout the novel. Is Laurie King training the reader’s perceptions to be more acute, just as Holmes is training Russell?

There’s a considerable age difference between Holmes and Russell. How does this influence their relationship, and how does their relationship change throughout the book?

What do you think about an author using another writer’s creation? Does using one of the most famous characters in literary history help or hinder King’s work?

For a list of fiction books where Sherlock Holmes is a character and a list of “The Best of Sherlock Holmes in Film and TV,” go to the Everyone’s Reading website at [www.everyonesreading.info](http://www.everyonesreading.info).

## Everyone’s Reading *The Beekeeper’s Apprentice* is sponsored by the following Metro Net libraries:

### Baldwin Public Library

248-647-1700

[www.baldwinlib.org](http://www.baldwinlib.org)

### Bloomfield Township Public Library

248-642-5800

[www.btpl.org](http://www.btpl.org)

### Canton Public Library

734-397-0999

[www.cantonpl.org](http://www.cantonpl.org)

### Farmington Community Library

248-553-0300

[www.farmlib.org](http://www.farmlib.org)

### Rochester Hills Public Library

248-656-2900

[www.rhpl.org](http://www.rhpl.org)

### Southfield Public Library

248-796-4200

[www.southfieldlibrary.org](http://www.southfieldlibrary.org)

### West Bloomfield Township Public Library

248-682-2120

[www.wbplib.org](http://www.wbplib.org)

In addition, the following public libraries are participating in Everyone’s Reading:

### Auburn Hills Public Library

248-370-9466

[auburn-hills.lib.mi.us](http://auburn-hills.lib.mi.us)

### Dearborn Public Library

313-943-2330

<http://dearbornlibrary.org>

### Oak Park Public Library

248-691-7480

<http://ci.oak-park.mi.us/Library/Library.htm>

### Royal Oak Public Library

248-246-3700

[www.ropl.org](http://www.ropl.org)

### William P. Faust Public Library of Westland

734-326-6123

[www.westland.lib.mi.us](http://www.westland.lib.mi.us)

February 14 – April 25, 2008

Everyone’s Reading

*The  
Beekeeper’s  
Apprentice*

Reader’s  
Guide





## What is Everyone's Reading?

Everyone's Reading is a community wide reading program sponsored by public libraries in Oakland and Wayne counties. Similar to other One Book, One Community programs across the country, Everyone's Reading promotes community dialogue through the shared experience of reading and discussing the same book. Additional programming, related to issues and topics in the selected book, is offered throughout the community to enhance the reading experience.



**This year's Everyone's Reading selection is *The Beekeeper's Apprentice* by Laurie R. King.**

### Previous Everyone's Reading Selections:

- 2007 *Arc of Justice: A Saga of Race, Civil Rights, and Murder in the Jazz Age*  
— by Kevin Boyle
- 2006 *Shadow Divers: The True Adventure of Two Americans Who Risked Everything to Solve one of the Last Mysteries of World War II*  
— by Robert Kurson
- 2005 Author Elizabeth McCracken, featuring *Here's Your Hat, What's Your Hurry;* *The Giant's House;* and *Niagara Falls All Over Again*
- 2004 *Saul and Patsy*  
— by Charles Baxter
- 2003 *A Lesson Before Dying*  
— by Ernest J. Gaines
- 2002 *Pay It Forward*  
— by Catherine Ryan Hyde

## Why read *The Beekeeper's Apprentice*?

Everyone loves a good mystery. People have been interested in solving crimes from the beginning of time. The fight between good and evil, the fascination with the criminal mind, and our desire to see justice done makes the mystery universally appealing. Mysteries are the ultimate in armchair adventure, offering an escape that quickens our minds and makes our pulses race.

*The Beekeeper's Apprentice* is a classic mystery novel and the first in a series featuring an unlikely pair of detectives. Mary Russell – age 15, strong-willed, brilliant and in mourning for her entire family – literally stumbles over the world's greatest detective on the moors of Sussex. Thus dramatically begins an unlikely partnership between the very Victorian Sherlock Holmes and a girl at the dawn of a modern age.

### Who is Sherlock Holmes?

Sherlock Holmes is the most famous literary detective in English literature, and one of the most identifiable fictional characters in the world. The stories by Arthur Conan Doyle remain the standard for all detective stories. Holmes and the stories about him — known as “the canon” — are so popular that many think of him as a real person. The attention he's received from authors and filmmakers, and the fact that we all know what he looks like – the hawk-like features, piercing eyes, deerstalker cap, pipe, and magnifying glass – make Conan Doyle's novels perfect for the novice and veteran mystery reader alike.

## How to Get Involved

**Check out *The Beekeeper's Apprentice*** from a participating library (see a list of participating libraries in this Reader's Guide).

**Discuss** the book and **participate** in the various programs.

**Use this guide** to lead your own book discussion group or attend one of the special Everyone's Reading events listed in the program brochure and at [www.everyonesreading.info](http://www.everyonesreading.info).

## About the Author

Laurie R. King is the award-winning author of two mystery series, one featuring Kate Martinelli, a police detective in San Francisco, and the other Mary Russell, a young American girl who becomes the apprentice and partner of the “retired” Sherlock Holmes.

King says she spent her childhood reading her way through libraries “like a termite through balsa.” She earned a Bachelor's degree in Religious Studies from the University of California and her M.A. from the Graduate Theological Union. She and her husband, a retired professor of comparative religion, have two children and live in northern California.

King's first book, *A Grave Talent* (1993), received the 1994 Edgar Award for Best First Novel and a 1995 John Creasey Memorial Award. This was followed by the 1996 Nero Wolfe Award for *A Monstrous Regiment of Women* and the 2002 Macavity Award for Best Novel for *Folly*. She has also been nominated for an Agatha Award, an Orange Prize, and two more Edgars. *The Beekeeper's Apprentice* was named one of The Century's Best 100 Mysteries by the Independent Mystery Booksellers Association.



## Meet the Author

Join author Laurie R. King to hear about her experiences writing *The Beekeeper's Apprentice*. Laurie King will sign copies of her book, which will be available for purchase.

### Wednesday, April 16 at 7 PM

Baldwin Public Library  
300 W. Merrill Street  
Birmingham

### Thursday, April 17 at 2 PM

Gary M Doyle Center  
7275 Wing Lake Road  
(North of 14 Mile Road)  
Bloomfield Township

### Thursday, April 17 at 7 PM

Farmington Community Library  
Main Library Auditorium  
32737 West Twelve Mile Road  
Farmington Hills

### Friday, April 18 at 7 PM

Royal Oak Public Library  
222 East Eleven Mile Road  
Royal Oak



## Everyone is reading Laurie King? Imagine that!

I love the idea of a community reading project, and so was overjoyed to be asked to do one in Michigan for *The Beekeeper's Apprentice*. Not only does this mean I get to come and talk to library patrons about writing, a thing I always enjoy, but it means that I've written a story that crosses borders.

When I write a book, I don't picture its audience—I write more or less for myself, and am always pleased, and a little surprised, when others enjoy it as well. Since *Beekeeper* was first published, in 1994, I've been fascinated by the wide range of readers attracted to Mary Russell and her partner the retired-detective-turned-beekeeper, Sherlock Holmes. Who would have thought one book would interest everyone from a middle school student to an 85-year-old woman to a retired air force officer? But I've had letters from each of those, to express their admiration for the book, and I often hear of teachers who have been introduced to the series by their students, and mothers by their daughters.

I hope you find *The Beekeeper's Apprentice* of interest, as well, and I look forward to talking about it in April.

Yours,  
*Laurie R. King*

